CLAY GEERDES

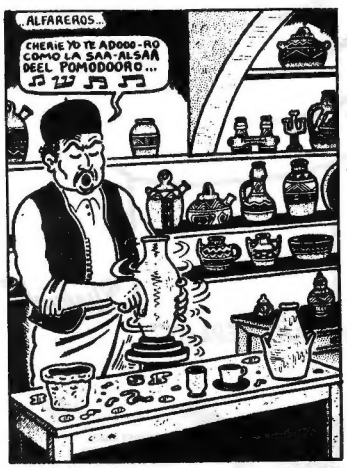
COMIX WORLD

EL VIBORA 22 ©1981

The TIME BANDITS are midgets and they are the real stars of the picture, so how come no billing?

COMIX WORLD 185. Nov. 27, 1981. © Clay Geerdes, Bx 7081, Berkeley, CA 94707. World Rights Reserved.

Illos around the edge of this page are from the 22 issue of EL VIBORA, the ultimate Spanish comic for adults. The artists are into politics, ultra-violence, weird sex, S/M, and lots of other pop comic topics. Information from Jose Berenguer Plaza Beatas 3, Barcelona, SPAIN.* If you still do not know why Dave Sim's CEREBUS is such a popular character, the page at your right should tell you a lot. In #31, MOON ROACH (any resemblance to MOON KNIGHT Coincidental) has a bit of a tête a tete with Cerebus. $2pp from Sim, POB 1674, Kitchener, Ontario, Canada N2G 4R2.* An illo by Spain in Nov SAN FRANCISCO mag. Rap on Spain in REAL ART LETTER 5.



E-C fans will want to save their money for a trip to New York on March 27, 1982--the whole E-C crew will be at Dimensions Con at the NY Statler Hotel--Gaines, Feldstein, Elder, Kamen, and Kurtzman. Kurtzman is getting a lot of ink lately, interviewed in COMICS JOURNAL, now in SPIRIT 31 (by Eisner).* CITY LIMITS 2 is 25¢/stamp from Bruce Chrislip, 1562 E Olive Way #107, Seattle, WA 98102. C.G.

It's here at last--the book that all of California comic fandom has been anxiously awaiting for over 6 months: *THE COMPLETE COLLECTOR'S GUIDEBOOK TO CALIFORNIA COMIC-BOOK STORES, 1982 EDITION!* This is the encyclopedic reference for California comic-book collectors, listing where the stores are, what they buy, what they trade, and what they sell. This book is not just a simple "listing!" The *GUIDEBOOK* contains maps, addresses, phone nos., business days & hours, products, services, current wants, detailed commentary, and more! Only $9. Money back guarantee. Eric Groves, 5415 Valley Ridge Avenue, L. A. CA 90043.

Why can't people learn from the experiences of others?

"Just because it happened to you, doesn't mean it will happen to me."

"Just because you got burned by that publisher doesn't mean I will."

"Just because the company ripped off your art doesn't mean the same thing will happen to mine."

"Why should I believe you? Who the hell are you?"

I spend a lot of my time giving people advice.

From my viewpoint, it's good advice.

Sometimes, people follow it.

Usually, they don't.

New people come along every day who decide they will get into comics. Someone has told them they draw well and they ought to do something with their artwork. I get letters from many of these people every year and I answer all of them. I tell them what to expect if they send their art to A or B. I tell them who does what and how often. I tell them how hard it is to survive while waiting for a book to come out a couple of years in the future. I tell them if they want love and approval, show the art to friends and relatives. Publishers are in business to make money. Art is their product. Don't expect any approval from them unless you have the product they use. Few people have that product.

The publishers don't need you. They have more than enough artists to fill their limited number of books.

Only a handful of people are ever going to make a decent living out of comics. The majority are going to be frustrated all the time.

There are people out there who think the underground comics companies are viable markets for their work. I hear about people who are thinking of getting into undergrounds. I don't understand these people. It should be clear from the few comix that have come out during the year that the underground companies are publishing very few books and those books are drawn by people who have been drawing for those companies for many years.

Undergrounds have prestige for many young artists. They have become a goal.

What happens? Maybe you do a one or two-pager and it gets accepted by Last Gasp or Krupp for an anthology comic like ANARCHY or BIZARRE SEX. $50 a page. You're on your way. The months pass. No check. What's going on? A year passes. Still no check. No one is answering your polite letters. Is there anyone out there? Does anyone care? What's going on is simple. The book you're in isn't finished. One artist can hold it up for a couple of years. I know a few books that have been in the works for over five years. The artists who got their work in first have long given up on the book. When all the art is in, the book is usually laid out and printed, but not always.

(CONT'D P. 2)

The publisher may get the last of the work when his bank account is too low and he has to wait for some of his accounts to pay up before he can go to the printer. He may be printing four at the same time and this means he will wait for the rest of the art for the other books before printing. Oh, you're still waiting for that first story to come out? Okay, it finally comes out. And you didn't get a copy or a check. Well, you wait some more. Perhaps another polite letter. You want to say, "WHERE THE FUCK IS THAT CHECK FOR THE ARTWORK YOU ACCEPTED TWO YEARS AGO, ASSHOLE?" but you have to eat those words, be a nice polite person. Finally, a check arrives. You may even get a copy of a comic book you're in, but not all publishers send out contributors' copies. You did it! You're actually in print. But what a shitty print job! All that cross-hatching gone to black. All those hours for nothing. Oh, you didn't understand about reductions. And the publisher didn't tell you. Well, why should he teach you what you ought to know already? Meanwhile, you have a lot of other pages floating around and you did them the same way. What to do? Write and ask to have them returned to you? No, no sense in doing that unless someone accepts one and wants to print it.

It's so easy for people who know nothing about the business. A young woman talked to me a few months ago about doing a comic book. She had an idea and wanted me to recommend some artists. I asked her if she had made a deal with a publisher. She hadn't. I told her that was the first thing to do, talk to a publisher about the idea and get a commitment. It is not true that a book will get published if you solicit the art first. You may get a group of artists to draw some stories for your book, then find out you can't get it published. They've done all their work for nothing then and how are they going to feel about you? You made them a promise when you solicited that work. You agreed to get the book out. There are a lot of unpublished books around these days. Back in the early seventies when the underground comix were booming, people got books together, knowing that one of the companies would get them out. It's not like that in the eighties. Now you find your publisher first, sell him the idea and the artists, get a concrete deal, then you start drawing.

It's been customary in the comix world to hype books long before they are finished. I used to print this kind of gossip, but I quit it. So many books never got out. Many weren't even drawn. like VELVET VICE. Jim Osborne drew four pages of it which ran in an issue of ARCADE. People still have VV on their want lists. Like GONE. It was never published either. For the past five years, Spain and Wilson have been talking about a book, but they keep getting commercial gigs and the book hasn't been drawn. So COMIX WORLD only mentions books that exist these days, books I have a copy of.

People often ask me about various artists and I answer them honestly. If the artist doesn't deliver, that's the message. I know a lot of ug artists who have accepted money for work they never did. Some artists just say "yes" and add the project to a list that won't be completed this decade. Some need the money and they say "yes" even though the project is not their trip and they have no interest in it. Artwork done under such circumstances shows this lack of interest. Most of the artists I know have one attitude toward what they consider "commercial" work and another toward their personal work. An artists' own books are usually his best.

If you want to do a comic book, you ought to have $3-5 grand set aside for the project (that's a 10,000 print run).

If you're going to publish it yourself, best consult with a good printer. There is a lot of technical information you must have.

Distribution is going to be your major problem. If you make a deal with one of the publishers, distribution will become his problem. At the same time, you will lose control of the book.

If you decide to do it yourself, you may still want to consult a publisher about your cover. It may be possible for you to get in on a gang printing and save a lot of bucks.

You have to do a lot of thinking. Here are some questions. What makes you think an audience would want to read the book you have in mind? What is your book about? What can you do when an artist submits work that just doesn't fit what you had in mind when you asked him to join in the book? Are you simply doing a poor imitation of some other comic? Is there really anything unique in what you are doing? Are you locking into any contemporary trends that may be outmoded by the time your book gets out? Undergrounds, with their 2-3 year time gap, often contain topical material that is no longer of interest.

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